

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Provide limited government – This committee substitute requires school districts to observe Veterans' Day as a school holiday.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation:

School Calendars

Currently, district school boards have flexibility to determine their own school calendars. They are directed by rule to adopt an annual calendar prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, and must file it with DOE (6A-10.019, F.A.C.). By rule, the calendar must support the following objectives:

- Minimal loss of time between student exit from one public institution and entry into another,
- Opportunity for students to move through the educational system at their respective paces,
- Opportunity for school personnel to utilize in-service and continuing education, and
- Opportunity for effective and efficient utilization of resources.

Beyond the requirement to support these objectives, there are no limitations on the school board-adopted calendar. During the 2004-05 school year a total of 50 school districts observed Veterans' Day as a school holiday.¹

Veterans' Day History²

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor (in England, Westminster Abbey; in France, the Arc de Triomphe).

These memorial services all took place on November 11, the anniversary of the end of World War I at 11:00 a.m., November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month), which became known as Armistice Day.

Armistice Day officially became a holiday in the United States in 1926, and a national holiday 12 years later. On June 1, 1954, the name was changed to Veterans Day to honor all U.S. veterans.

In 1968, new legislation changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that November 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans. Therefore, in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

Effect of Proposed Changes:

This committee substitute requires all school districts to recognize Veterans' Day as a student holiday, to be celebrated on November 11th, and that no classes are held on that day.

Classes may be observed on that day as a make-up for classes which were cancelled due to inclement weather, a declared state of emergency, or for the health, safety or welfare of students or faculty.

¹ Statistical Brief, Bureau of Education Information & Accountability Services. School District Calendars, Table 3 – Holidays, 2004-05. Available at <http://www.firm.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/calendar.pdf>

² Brunner, "Veterans Day," n.d., <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/veteransday1.html> (March 27, 2005)

If November 11th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the district may observe the school holiday on the weekday immediately following or preceding that weekend.

This committee substitute takes effect January 1, 2006.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates an unnumbered section of law to require school districts to observe Veterans' Day, and to prohibit classes on that day.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2005.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government expenditures.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government expenditures.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds. This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities. This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities have to raise revenues.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

On March 22, 2005, the PreK-12 Committee amended this bill (with an amendment to the amendment) before voting to report the bill favorably. The amendment allows school districts to hold classes on Veterans Day in order to make-up for classes that were cancelled due to inclement weather or a declared state of emergency. An amendment to this amendment added the health, safety or welfare of students or faculty as additional reasons a school district may need make-up classes scheduled on Veterans' Day. The original amendment also changed the effective date of the bill from July 1, 2005, to January 1, 2006, in order to accommodate districts that have already approved their school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year. The committee then voted to report the bill favorably with committee substitute by a vote of 8 to 0.

On March 30, 2005, the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs amended this bill before reporting the bill favorably. The amendment allows that should November 11th fall on a Saturday or Sunday, school districts may schedule a school holiday on the weekday preceding or after that weekend. The committee then voted to report the bill favorably with committee substitute by a vote of 8 to 0.